

MINUTES

**Third Quarterly Meeting of the
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION
Held, pursuant to notice
Friday, November 16, 2001 — 10:00 AM
Central Office Headquarters — 1719 Southridge Drive
Jefferson City, MO**

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call
In attendance: **Chairman, Carl Niewoehner, Vice-Chairman, Deborah Halter, Member Joseph Frank, Member Reginald Bassa and Member Donald Gralike**
- C. Introductions
Guests and staff present.
 - 1. Guests: **Col. (Ret.) Wayne Medley**, Director, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **Jim Whitfield**, Western Area Coordinator, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **Norman Campbell**-Commander American Legion, Dept. of MO, Chairman MAVO
 - 2. Staff: **Sam McVay**, Executive Director; **Ronald Taylor**, Associate Director **Kim Harris**, Director Operations; **Anne Payne**, Superintendent of Homes; **Carl Hargus**, Director of Service to Veterans Program; **Jane Rustemeyer**, Public Information Manager; **Jill Talken**, Executive Secretary; **Jess Rasmussen**, Higginsville Cemetery; **Mike Robbins**, Springfield Cemetery;
- D. Approval of August 17, 2001 Commission Meeting Minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as recorded.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

Cemeteries – Jess Rasmussen, MVC Higginsville Cemeteries informed the Committee he met with American Legion National Commander. Also attended the Dedication of the new State Veteran Cemetery in Kentucky. Currently there have been 155 burials in the cemetery and 951 pre-registered burials.

Mike Robbins, Springfield Cemeteries reported to the Committee on Springfield Cemetery has hired Terry Farmer to work weekends assisting funeral homes, and with scheduling. Weekend coverage has been a very important issue. Currently there have been 601 burials in Springfield Veterans Cemetery with a 28% cremation rate.

Springfield Cemetery hosted the National Conference of State Veteran Cemeteries on October 3, 4, and 5th at Springfield. The conference went very well. Over 100 attendees representing 26 different states were present at the conference. It was decided that annual conferences would be beneficial. Plans to meet in September 2001, in New Jersey are underway.

Military Honors Program – Col. Medley, Director, MO Military Funeral Honors Program, Current statistics show Veteran Service Coordinators have assisted 13,770 veterans since July 1999, that is approximately 40% to 45% Veterans whom have passed away. They have performed 18.67 Veterans services per day, 560 per month over 6 months, and coordinated estimated 7,000 veteran services this year in the State of Missouri.

There has been issues pertaining to shortage of buglers. They advertised bid on statewide contract or buglers and the cost was tremendously expensive, however they were able to get two buglers in the St. Louis area for Jefferson Barracks Cemetery at a reasonable cost. They also currently have been using Boy Scouts and another individual to volunteer. Also they have asked Military Personnel to assist when possible.

Military Honors Program is looking into the purchase of a mechanical device for automobiles that would allow for TAPS CD to be played from the automobile for funeral services. There is a reliability issue involved as well in the use of these devices. The Military Honors Program has printed a new brochure for their Military Funeral Honors Program. This brochure is being distributed to Funeral Directors and Veteran Service Officers statewide in order to provide information to Veterans on this program.

Additional item to mention that the Military Honors Program along with the Federal Provider Partnership Program has been working with veteran service organizations to help compensate and give proper recognition to those individuals and organizations.

Jim Whitfield – expressed gladness to have Terry Framer, MVC Springfield Cemetery available on weekends will be very beneficial and can assist The Military Funeral Honors in distributing brochures to the Funeral Homes and Cemeteries. They will be covering 300 funeral homes in 78 counties and visiting 80 different county court houses throughout the State. This will be taking place the week after Thanksgiving. Anything MVC would like to include in the packet was welcome. Mr. Whitfield informed the Commission as a member of the ELKS, he would like to report that the National Service Program Special Trust Fund in July 2001, confirmed approval to assist the St. James Home and one additional Veterans home in providing \$70.00 per month to both of these homes to be paid to the Assistance Leagues. Checks will be sent to the Administrator of the Homes. They will add additional two homes next year and each year after.

MAVO – Norman Campbell newly elected MAVO Chairman and Commander Department Missouri, spoke to the Commission. MAVO met Wednesday, November 14th and discussed preparing funds for Veterans Programs and Benefits. An agenda is being prepared to send to the Legislator. Also MAVO has agreed to help with funding. Next MAVO meeting will be Tuesday, January 22, 2002.

Chairman Niewoehner asked of MVC to distribute to all Commission members a copy of the American Legion Resolution that was adopted involving Capitol Improvement Trust Fund.

III. NEW STAFF INTRODUCTIONS:

Mr. McVay introduced Hal Dulle, Assistant to the Director. Hal will be assisting the MVC in fundraising for Veterans Trust Fund and also working on Legislative Relations. He also will be working to get large corporate gifts to fund the VBATF. Hal is currently the Legislative Officer for the Marines League of Missouri.

Introduction of Jill Talken, Executive Secretary. Jill gave the Commission a brief background of her past employment.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

Management Report: Executive Director Comments: Sam McVay

Public Information - Informed the Committee the MO Veterans Commission is working to get the word out to Veterans about Veterans Benefits. The Lt. Governor, Joe Maxwell, has appointed a task force group. Task force will hold their first meeting November 19, 2001 at the MVC headquarters at 10:00 a.m. Staff within the MVC headed by Stan Smith, Administrator Warrensburg Home with a background in Marketing has been working on Public Information details. They will focus on developing a common theme and logo for the MVC and preparing literature to get out to the public. Jane Rustemeyer's new title is Public Information Specialist for

MVC. Jane will be getting information out to media and circulating to the public programs and benefits literature.

Budget - Accommodating the Governors 18% budget cut. Impact on the \$1,200,000 + GR money that we have had to come with, MVC recommended to the Governor that we would not touch any of the five older Veteran Homes, the STV, and Cemeteries. The focus would be on the growth of the two new homes and controlling admissions. After much discussion the recommendation was approved from the Governors office. January 2002, there is potential for more cuts. MVC's main objective would be most importantly to limit the affect on services provided to veterans and to limit the affect on operations concerning employee morale. Common sense will be used in determining where these cuts will be made. Commissioner Gralike asked if Warrensburg and Cameron Homes are slowing in numbers in admissions. Mr. McVay advised that the Cameron Home has shown slow movement, however the numbers on the waiting list are misleading. Not all individuals on the list are ready to enter into homes at this time. If the individual should decline residence their name is placed at the bottom of the list. Each individual is given two chances to accept residents if after the second decline their name is then removed from the waiting list and they must refile their application request. MVC will look at this system and try to determine a solution on waiting list issues. MVC would like to increase Cameron Home from 133 to 150 residents and Warrensburg Home from 117 to 150 residents. Commissioner Gralike expressed concerns on the application process. He indicated he sent his application in the St. Louis home approx. 2 months ago and has not been notified of receipt. Anne Payne, Director of Homes informed the Commission that the Homes all have procedures in processing of applications. A review process was developed and is in place and acknowledgment of all applications is part of the processing. She will contact St. Louis Home and determine what has happened in this procedure.

VBATF – Goal to find some 32,000 plus Missouri Veterans should be receiving some type of Veterans benefits and are not. MVC goal is to get funding. The Veterans Benefits Awareness Task Force Report was distributed to members. Mr. McVay briefly described the contents of the report to the Commission. This report will go out to all Legislative members. As indicated by Mr. Campbell, MAVO approved a letter and is sending out to all the legislators asking to fix funding for VCCITF.

Events - The 18th Annual St. Louis Veterans Celebration was held on Saturday, November 10th and Mr. McVay assisted with the distribution of WWII Recognition Medals along with General Shull. Sunday, November 11th Mr. McVay attended the Carnahan Memorial Dedication in Rolla, MO.

On Monday, November 12th the Governor distributed three diplomas to WWII Veterans and nearly 100 medals. The word about MVC is getting out to Veterans with all these events. VBATF appointment letters from the Lt. Governor were mailed this week.

Pearl Harbor – MVC and the Governor's Office have been working together to locate as many Pearl Harbor Survivors in Missouri as possible. The Governor will be sending out recognition letters to those survivors. The Lt. Governor will present Mr. John Baskette, Pearl Harbor Survivor Association, Inc. a letter and Proclamation from the Governor on Monday at 10:00 a.m. The Lt. Governor also will have a declaration declaring December 7, 2001 the 60th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Mr. McVay also indicated the MVC would cautiously check into a memorial or some type of recognition for these survivors.

Visits – Mr. McVay visited the Center for Study of the Korean War on Tuesday, November 13th. The Center is located at Graceland University in Independence, MO. This museum is the largest repository for Korean War information.

Appointments - Under the direction of the Committee a letter was written to the Governor from the commission chairman and Mr. McVay in reference to the appointment of commission members. A copy of the letter was distributed to the members.

The letter dated August 23, 2001 informed the Governor of three members on the MVC are serving on expired terms and a fourth's member term will expire in November 2001. Commissioner Halter reported to the Commission she spoke with an advisor that informed her as long as there is no problem areas in the MVC then the Governor's office was not concerned at this time.

Legislative Relations – Next week Mr. McVay will be meeting with individuals to address improving legislative relations for the commission. Opportunities are happening in the seven homes, two cemeteries along with the spring dedication of six new CBOC's. MVC will be thanking legislators for what they have done. Getting the legislators more involved with the commission activities will help to improve legislative relations.

Missouri Veterans Homes: Anne Payne, Director of Homes

MVC Annual Report - is complete and was distributed to the members. Ms. Payne informed the commission that the report does include two fiscal years and contains record information about what MVC has done. She described the format and the creating process of the report. She noted the expanded budget section of the report and also the area of the VCCITF section that outlines the funding that is needed in this area. This report addresses the quality management in developing leadership on the homes program issues and includes a detailed graphs of how Missouri measured out on National levels in Clinical Service areas. Commissioner Frank asked to whom this report is distributed. Jane Rustemeyer informed the commission that the report is distributed to Director of Veterans Affairs in 50 states, MAVO, Legislature, MVC Service Officers, Homes and Cemeteries. Also noted by commission meeting attendee to send to key leaders of Veterans groups. Chairman Niewoehner advised to send the reports to the members serving on joint veteran committees prior to January 22nd. Mr. McVay informed the Commission the next annual report would be issued in September 2002. Mr. McVay entertained any suggestions or comments about the report to please contact MVC. Commissioner Bassa expressed concerns about the steady declining of VCCTIF. Chairman Niewoehner indicated to the commission that the Resolution adopted by the American Legion addresses this concern.

Mr. McVay also noted that GR funding is also declining as well. MVC is receiving great support from veteran service organizations and MAVO. Hal Dulle will be working in educating the legislators with this issue. If gambling boat fees were to go back into the funding this could generate \$24 million a year. No position has been made at this time.

Construction Update: Sam McVay

Construction - Memo dated November 15, 2001 prepared by Tim Norton was handed out. (see attachment)

VA Update: Carl Hargus

Mr. Hargus noted that Gary Williams, Director of VA Regional office was unable to attend meeting but is looking forward to serving on the VBATF.

Secretary Principi ordered that workload is going to reduce by 1% per month to cover the backlog. A recent Veterans Service Managers Conference recommended time limits drop to 100 days in processing claims. The Secretary has not yet approved this recommendation. Help in reducing backlog all Missouri pensions will be processed in Milwaukee, WI, this will allow St. Louis area to work on other claims. In order to check on pension claims, two 800 numbers will be designed one number will be for general public and one number set up for Veteran Service Organizations. They hope to be processing pension claims in this new location in December.

Service to Veterans Program: Carl Hargus, Director

Service to Veterans Program - Held Statewide Training Conference on October 31 though November 2, 2001 at Branson. All service program officers attended. The conference provided valuable computer information to officers, appeals information, VA issues along with being informed of employee benefits.

8 hours of state mandated diversity training that is required has now been completed with this training. Mike Robbins provided good information on Springfield Cemetery Program at the conference. A questionnaire was distributed to all attendees.

TRIP 2 Training will take place December 3, 4 and 5th. This training program allows Service officers to assist Federal Government. This is Level 2 Training and will be held in St. Louis. Certain Service officers attending this training will then provide training to other officers across the state. Computer training on the CAPS Program will be offered at this training.

All service to veteran officers in the Homes will be relocating to CBOC's locations in the spring. This will allow better access for the public to meet with officers.

Mr. McVay noted his conversation with Gary Williams indicated that Secretary Principi's orders contain explicit directions that in 18 months they will draw down from 660,000 claims to 250,000. MVC expects the VBATF will bring in thousands of applications. WWII claim applicants have been prioritized in processing.

Cemeteries: Ron Taylor, Associate Director

Interviews for Cemetery Directors for the two new Cemeteries will be taking place within the next month. He explained it is an advantage to have these Directors in place prior to construction.

Mr. Taylor said the Cemetery Conference was great. Networking was very valuable.

Jefferson Barracks will be full in approximately 10 years. Jefferson Barracks is still trying to acquire more property.

Cemetery update through October 2001, was handed out. (see attached)

Commissioner Gralike asked if MVC is considering a cemetery in the eastern part of the state. Mr. Taylor stated a five- year plan in the land selection and design would be necessary. Land selection would have to take place in 2004 or 2005.

Mr. McVay added that the National Guard has expressed some interest in donating some the adjoining land to Jefferson Barracks. MVC will be asking Governor Holden to take to the Governors Conference funding issues for cemeteries and ask the federal government for something like per diem for the cemetery program. The need is there but the funding is not available.

Commissioner Frank noted that Mr. Taylor attended the American Legion Conference recently and spoke to the Legion Finance Committee about the Grants Program and did an excellent job.

The projected dates for opening a veteran cemetery in the St. Louis area would be in 2009 upon finding acceptable land and careful planning. MVC would need to begin preliminary studies for sites. If land were donated the MVC would act quickly, however no land has been donated at such time. MVC is working on these issues.

Commissioner Halter asked Mr. Taylor if MVC has done anything about obtaining information on updating grounds to a respectable standard in the Civil War Cemetery located close to the

Higginsville Cemetery. Mr. Taylor answered that MVC inquired about this project and was informed that since the Civil War Cemetery was a historic site and would require a historian to be available on site.

Service Organization Grants Program - is underway and has made awards to four service agreements including American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans and Vietnam Veterans of America. Amvets has inquired but no applications have been received to date. MVC has received application from the City of St. Louis and we are waiting on information from the Attorney General's office and will be making that award next week. There is still discussion with the Attorney General about possible application from the County of St. Louis.

Work is being done on partnership efforts with service organizations in helping them with grants to support their programs in exchange for use of some of their funding to support MVC, such as the Outpatient Clinics. The VBATF will discuss potential programs where we think the service organizations can play a major role with helping veterans of the state of Missouri.

Memorial Grants: Ron Taylor, Associate Director

Memorial Grants Program - Mr. Taylor indicated at the last meeting questions arose about the Memorial Grants Program. Mr. Taylor invited guest Col. Jerry Brown from Wentworth Military Academy, and Andy Scott, Executive Director of National Military Education Center and Museum to answer questions.

Memorial Grants Committee Recommendations was distributed to members.

Recommendation items:

1. Chillicothe Veterans Memorial
Request received after July 1, 2001. Recommend delay until next commission meeting when determination of funds awardable this fiscal year is possible.
Commissioner Halter made a motion to approve recommendation. Commissioner Bassa seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.
2. St. Joseph – Military Heritage Museum
Grant Request \$80,000 at August Commission meeting \$54,000 approved dependent on clarification of “curator/director” services. We received that information which seems adequate. The Director requests recommendation for the full \$80,000. The committee still believes the \$54,000 is appropriate. Commissioner Gralike made a motion to approve recommendation. Commissioner Halter seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.
3. Texas County Memorial
Request for \$2,284. Request received prior to July 1, 2001 but misfiled with older request. This renovation projects seems within grant guidelines. Committee recommends approval of \$2,284. Commissioner Gralike made a motion to approve recommendation. Commissioner Halter seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.
4. Charles Wood/Spanish Armada Veterans War Memorial
Grant request for \$750 was denied at August meeting as placement at gravesite of Charles Wood seemed to be private memorial. Resubmitted request with placement of memorial at County Courthouse. Would recognize Charles Wood on one side due to his significance and all Spanish Armada War Veterans on other side. With these modifications Committee recommends approval of \$750.

Commissioner Gralike made a motion to approve recommendation. Commissioner Frank seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

5. Wentworth Military Academy Project Heritage

The Committee recommended approval of a \$150,000 grant request at August Commission meeting. Commission delayed return because of questions regarding school and relationship to Wentworth Foundation. Information submitted indicates school as non-profit and foundation 501(3)c status. Colonel Jerry Brown is present to answer questions regarding the school or project. Revised figures have lowered the grant request to \$144,748.50. Committee recommends approval of grant of \$144,748.50.

Col. Jerry Brown answered questions regarding the school and projects. He advised the commission there is five memorials on Campus at this time; this is one of five. Memorial to WWI Veterans, Chapel for WWII and Korean War, Memorial to Vietnam Veterans and gathering information on Desert Shield-Desert Storm. This particular Memorial would be for two individuals recognizing a Vietnam helicopter pilot and WWII infantryman. Commissioner Halter asked Col. Brown what percentage of student population at the academy is female? Col. Brown indicated 12%. Commissioner Halter said the military is holding at 13%. What percentage of female population has been accepted into the Air Force Academy from Wentworth Academy? Col. Brown stated that the school has 100% acceptance into the Air Force. Commissioner Gralike made a motion to approve recommendation. Commissioner Bassa seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

6. National Military Education Center and Museum

Grant request of \$2,000,000 delayed for additional information at August Commission meeting. Following several meeting with project personnel and submission of more information the Committee wishes to make its recommendation and then allow Andy Scott, Executive Director, of the project to make a brief presentation.

The Committee recommended approval of a grant of \$1,500,000 for this fiscal year. The Committee recommends that no funds be disbursed until verification of land transfer and substantiation of value of land. Funds could be released on a quarterly basis after Commission staff has evaluated project progress and use of funds expended in previous quarters. The standard agreement would be signed requiring returns of funds to the state if not used for purpose intended.

With Commission approval of grant, Memorial Grants Staff will work with the project staff to design procedures for initiating funds transfer and routine evaluation of ongoing projects.

Mr. Taylor gave a brief overview to the commission on information that has been provided by the National Military Education Center and Museum. There is information available for the commission to review.

Mr. Taylor distributed a copy of letter received from the Attorney General dated November 8, 2001, in reference to Veterans Commission Trust Fund Memorial Grant. The letter indicates the commission may impose any reasonable restrictions it deems appropriate and has the authority to set conditions upon recipients of matching grants.

Commissioner Gralike made a motion to approve the recommendation of \$1.5 million subject to quarterly approval within the current fiscal year. Each payment request will be evaluated for approval based on report submitted by Memorial Grants Committee. The Commission at Commission meetings would make this approval. Commissioner Bassa seconded the motion.

Mr. Taylor then allowed Andy Scott, Executive Director to present the commission with an 8 to 10 minute presentation.

The commission asked Mr. Scott if the Federal Government has been asked to help with funding of this project. Mr. Scott indicated that the Center intends on asking the Federal Government.

Original study performed indicated total estimate of overall costs to the project would range \$70 million. Added on top of that was a \$10 million endowment.

Commissioner Bassa asked if the project would require the Center to come back to the commission asking for additional funding. Mr. Scott indicated he does anticipate meeting with the commission at the next quarterly meeting and addressing this issue in specific detail.

After much discussion the Commission by voice vote passed the motion unanimously.

Central Office: Kim Harris, Office Manager

Central Office - Ms. Harris informed the commission that MVC has been in the process of restructuring central office with new staff hiring, implementing policy and procedures within the office as well as current work is being done on program expansions, improvement of mail tracking system, a purchasing system is in place and budget reports are being monitored. Public information and communications program is working to enhance web-site update brochures being distributed and designing a uniform logo and message to the public.

Col. Medley informed that the WWII Medal Recognition Project also has helped MVC in getting public attention. Current estimate of applications on WWII medals is 30,000 and is projected to reach 50,000-60,000 by the end of the year.

V. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Election of Commission Officers - Commissioner Gralike made a motion to reelect current Chairman, Carl Niewoehner as chairman of the commission. Commissioner Halter seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Newly Elected officers will serve a two-year term.

Chairman Niewoehner requested a group photo be taken immediately following the meeting.

Chairman Niewoehner announced election of Vice Chairman and entertained nominations. Commissioner Gralike made a motion to reelect current Vice Chairman Halter to the Commission. Commissioner Bassa seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion Passed unanimously.

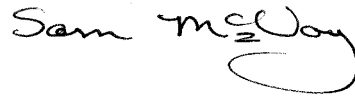
Commissioner Frank requested the MVC notify all commission members in the future of new hires and key staff changes within MVC.

Next Meeting

The next meeting commission will be held on Tuesday, January 22, 2002 at 10:00 a.m., lunch will be served.

MAVO will hold Legislative Day at the Capitol on January 22nd. Coffee and doughnuts will be served at 7:00 a.m. in the Rotunda. MAVO meeting will be at 1:30 p.m. at the DAV bldg.

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam McVay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The "S" is large and loops around the "am". The "McVay" is written more compactly, with the "y" having a long, sweeping tail that loops back under the "ay".

Samuel E. McVay, Ph.D., Secretary